

The Stroke

The lightning bolt of the stroke cleared his memory white.
He didn't sense the oncoming strike,
The storm seemed distant yet,
At the edge of the radar.

My father's dad, Grampy, idled sidelong in his cuffed jeans,
Bent knees, blue corduroy cowboy hat out,
From his summer home, a 5th-wheel camper,
Anchored at the dirt road trailer park.

One second, aiming toward the campfire.
The next, seized by the invisible hand of electricity gone haywire,
Knocked out, the ground meeting him squarely,
Every inch of his six-foot frame unplugged.

He lingered a couple of days in a white-sheeted room,
no fire, surrounded by electrical wires,
Pumping energy into dead tubes, inert oxygen capacitors,
And blinking fluorescent lights.

I sat in the dark of his room,
Lights ablaze, eyes closed and wet and
held his hand, clammy, aloof, and short-circuited,
Already hovering shockingly above and beyond and distant.

W^m. J. Hetrick
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